

A COMPARISON OF THE CAUSES OF THE SECOND CONFLICTS IN LIBERIA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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ABSTRACT

The causes of conflict in Africa varied from one conflict to another due to the varied but similar historical background of the continent. Despite numerous studies on the causes of conflict in Africa little research has been done to compare the causes of Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) second conflicts. There is therefore the need to close the existing gap regarding conflict theory and empirical evidence in the comparison of the causes of the conflicts during Liberia and the DRC second conflicts to enhance better understanding of why one conflict was resolve with one peace agreement whilst the other conflict took more than one agreements to bring sustainable peace. The study, therefore, seeks to do a comparison of the causes of conflict in the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC and it implications for conflict resolution initiatives in Africa. The study employed a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology examines secondary data from publications on the causes of conflict on the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC. The Liberia and the DRC causes of the second conflicts suggest poverty, human rights violations, corruption, bad governance, ethnicity and natural resource facilitated the conflict.

KEY WORDS: Poverty, Human Rights Violations, Corruption, Bad Governance, Ethnicity and Natural Resource.

INTRODUCTION

A total understanding of the causes of conflict in Africa will help to initiate the appropriate conflict resolution in Africa (Kazanský, 2015). The causes of conflict rests on various pillars and depends on the nature of the conflict such as the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts. The Liberia second conflict of 1999 was triggered by alienation of certain ethnic groups, leading to the emergence of two new warring factions after the election of Charles Taylor (Kotia, 2015) with varied causes. The DRC second conflict of 1998 was caused by the ethnic violence between Hutu and Tutsi aligned forces. The work compares the causes of conflict of the Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo second conflicts. The work is organized into five main themes, namely background of the study, statement of problem, objective of the study, methodology of the study, method of data collection, method of data analysis, comparison of the root causes of the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC and draw lessons from Liberia and the DRC second conflicts. The relevance of the work to the study is the application of the outcome to amplify the causes of the conflict in the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts thereby drawing lessons and conclusion to improve upon conflict resolution initiatives in the future (Mlambo & Dliamnin, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The end of the Cold War and the Post-Cold War era brought to the fore a new stream of conflicts in Africa (Essuman-

Johnson, 2009). The breakdown of the ideological mind-set and the structures of the global alliances created ethnic and political tensions in some African countries (Abdallah, 2005). One of the highest periods of civil wars was 1991 and 1992 when the world experienced seventeen ongoing civil wars (Annan, 2014). Africa experienced violent conflicts than other continents (Achankeng, 2013). The detrimental effects of such conflicts and the implications for the economies and security of many African states have compelled African leaders to find the best way of resolving conflicts in Africa by understanding the causes of the conflict (Mlambo & Dliamnin, 2019). The study compared the causes of conflict in the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC. The study, therefore, seeks to investigate the causes of the second conflict of Liberia and the DRC, and the implications for conflict resolution initiatives in Africa.

Few studies have attempted to compare the causes of conflict among two countries within different sub-regions such as the DRC and Sierra Leone (Demirag, 2014) to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the resolution initiatives. A comparative examination of causes in Angola and South Africa (Gounden & Solomon, 2016), Kenya and Zimbabwe (Ikejiaku & Dauda, 2011) has been conducted to further understand strategies in Africa but not that of Liberia and the DRC. The international community has raised a lot of concerns over the causes of conflict in these two countries adopted (Abdul-Mumuni, 2007). Although experts have scrutinized the subject of the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC, there remain certain issues such as the causes of conflict which have not been adequately understood and dealt with.

The first issue is the inadequate comparative research analysis of the root causes of THE second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC has led to a gap in research (Annan, 2014; Whetho & Uzodike, 2009). The lack of in-depth knowledge of the root causes of the second conflicts and the effects of the causes on the success or the failure of the conflict resolution process has led to a gap in conflict resolution literature in Africa (Ikejiaku & Dauda, 2011). The study, therefore, sought to compare the causes of the second conflicts in Liberia and the DRC and to ascertain whether the causes of conflicts played any role in the success and failure of the conflicts in Liberia and the DRC, respectively.

Secondly, the study focuses on the lack of research on the comparative examination of the causes of the second conflict (Essuman-Johnson, 2009; Ikejiaku & Dauda, 2011). Furthermore, research has not been conducted with Causes of Conflict Theory on the comparative analysis in the two sub-regional countries (Coleman et al., 2014; Galtung, 1973; Schellenberg, 1996). Hence, the need arises to compare the causes of conflict to unresolved conflict to assess whether the initiatives played a role in the success or failure of the resolution. The study, therefore, sought to provide a better understanding of causes of conflict in Africa by comparing a country in the West African sub-region and another in Southeast Central Africa to address the current gap in theory and practice in conflict resolution in Africa.

Overall, the study sought to examine the historical root causes of the second conflict in the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC to make proposals on how to intervene differently in conflicts across different settings in Africa for sustainable peace.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the historical background to the Liberia and DRC Second Conflicts?
- What is the root causes of the second conflicts in Liberia and the DRC?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the causes of conflict in the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts to understand the causes of the second conflict to make recommendations to improve on Conflict Resolution in Africa.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To evaluate the historical background to the Liberia and DRC Second Conflicts.
- To discuss the root causes of the second conflicts in Liberia and the DRC.
- To draw lessons for future conflict resolution for sustainable peace in Africa.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology refers to the overall approach to the research procedure (Neuman, 2007). The study employed a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology examines secondary data from publications on the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC. Qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representation but a deeper understanding of a problem (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). In content qualitative research, the researcher is both the subject and the object of the research. The objective of the qualitative content methodology is to produce in-depth and illustrative information to understand the various dimensions of the problem under analysis (Neuman, 2007). The section discusses the research method and design, study area, study population, the method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

The study employed a case study approach due to the significant advantage associated with case study research. Case study is a social science research approach that aims to bring out unique characteristics and interesting differences in the situation under observation. Case study research allows in-depth review of new or unclear phenomena whilst retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Case study suits the study because the study sought to highlight a set of decisions, why the decisions were taken, how the decisions were implemented and with what result (Creswell, 2007; Neuman, 2007; Silverman, 2004). The second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC were chosen as cases because the two conflicts were compared from the lenses of the Cause of Conflict Theory. The methodology suited the current study since the comparison of conflict resolution interventions in Liberia and the DRC are unique. An understanding of the causes of conflict would provide insight on how to avoid mistakes conflict resolution in Africa in the future. The study focused solely on past occurrences and events relating to the causes of conflict which will help to resolve the causes of the conflicts by scrutinizing documents on the period.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in a systematic fashion to enable a researcher to answer research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities and business. Whilst methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same. The study relied on the interpretation of written documents, reports and other sources. The sources of data for any given study are classified under

two broad categories, namely primary and secondary data (Silverman, 2004). The primary source of data is defined as data collected directly for the first time. Secondary data, on the other hand, is the data already collected or produced by other scholars (Majid, 2018). The study relied on the interpretation of written documents and reports, among other sources. To achieve the objective of the study, secondary data was used to compare the two conflicts and the resolution process. Accordingly, the study assessed and analysed information relating to the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts. Secondary data was sourced from books, journals, articles, reports and other electronic sources including the United Nations (UN), Africa Union (AU), Economic Community West of African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Committee (SADC). Most of the books, reports and documents relating to the concept of conflict resolution were obtained from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) library, Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFSC) library and additional information was obtained from Internet sources.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the systematic application of statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense, recap and evaluate data. Various analytic procedures provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the phenomenon of interest from the statistical fluctuations present in the data (Silverman, 2004). Content analysis was used to organize the secondary data. Content analysis is one of the statistical tools widely and successfully used in several research areas including information and health science (Silverman, 2004). One advantage of content analysis is the provision of valuable historical and cultural insights over time through text analysis. Content analysis provides an unobtrusive means of analysis and focuses directly on communication via texts or transcripts and, hence, gets at the central aspect of social interaction (Creswell, 2007). The study adopted content analysis to address the research questions and relied on books, articles, websites and other periodicals published on conflicts and conflict resolution. The data gathered in the documents was grouped into themes based on the objectives of the study. Some of the themes included: root causes of conflicts, main actors in conflicts and the conflict resolution initiatives. Each of the themes was broken down into subthemes based on the theories underpinning the study. The researcher considered poverty, ethnic factor, corruption and bad governance, human rights violation and natural resource factor under root causes of conflicts. Additionally, for conflict resolution initiatives, themes such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, peacekeeping and peace agreements were considered.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework emphasizes on the use of Conflict Theory (Galtung, 1973; Suleymanov, 2017; Wanis & Ghais, 2014). The study employed Conflict Theory to explain the causes of conflict in the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC. Several reasons such as atrocities and escalation of the conflict to other parts of Africa accounted for the intervention by the international community in the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts (Kazanský, 2015). After Liberia and the DRC governments failed to halt the conflicts and the brutalities meted out to the people, the international community intervened by using various initiatives to help resolve the conflict without appropriate appreciation of the causes of the conflict. The researcher employed the Conflict Theory to explain the causes of conflicts in the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC.

The issue of ethnicity-based conflicts has dominated the centre of world politics since the period of the Cold War. They attract high consideration especially because they often lead to grievous war crimes such as genocide. The concept of ethnic wars to be a myth, because they advocate that the original causes of ethnic conflicts do not involve ethnicity, but

rather institutional, political and economic (Galtung, 1973; Kieh Jr., 2009). Ethnicity itself is not a cause of violent conflicts known from the 2nd half of the 20th century. They are not directly caused by inter-group differences, because the majority of ethnic groups follow their interests in a peaceful way most of the time, using functioning political channels. Some researchers explain the reasons for ethnic conflicts in connection with collapses of authoritarian regimes.

Natural resources in international politics and security science highly depends on the context of the subject matter the term is used in and which is applied in analyses (Humphreys, 2005). In some cases, this definition deals only with renewable resources – those that can be renewed either by human intervention or by natural process. Into this category belong trees and woods, water, wild animals, plants, soil, grazing land, etc (Rösch, 2011). In different context, the stated term includes; oil, gas and mineral resources (Humphreys, 2005).

Conflicts are characterized by human casualties, material losses, disruption of state infrastructure, enormous violations of basic human rights and civil liberties. The occurrence of conflicts within states has a devastating impact not only on the states themselves, but it also contributes to an overall regional instability. In the case of such states, governments are unable to, or do not address the real problems in their countries, do not ensure the basic human needs or guarantee the basic human rights and civil liberties. Many ethnic conflicts lead to heavy casualties, severe denial of human rights and material destruction, some of them even escalate into an inter-ethnic or internal war (Kazanský, 2015).

This type of conflict occurs mostly in poorer countries with weak or undemocratic governments. In the case of such states, governments are unable to, or do not address the real problems in their countries, do not ensure the basic human needs or guarantee the basic human rights and civil liberties. The majority of these countries do not have the relevant political institutions and lack legal elements of the political system. The course of the conflict is worsened by the absence of a leader, or a central authority, and it allows an extreme escalation and increases the number of human victims of domestic conflicts. Coups often occur in countries with weak governments and unstable political regimes (Kazanský, 2015).

Wanis & Ghais (2014) focus on International Conflict Resolution which seeks to prevent, reduce and transform potential or actual violence within and between states to a peaceful end. Conflict resolution stipulates a body of knowledge, practices, norms and institutions are tasked to prevent, reduce and transform potential or actual violent conflicts within and between states to a peaceful end to rebuild societies. The pathways of contemporary international conflict resolution practice are dispersed with success and failures which cost human life. Wanis & Ghais (2014) consider perennial debates concerning the causes of international conflicts and international conflict resolution to peace and agree several tools exist which conflicting parties and third parties use which are independent of interaction with the UN and regional organizations. The authors present prevention of conflict, negotiation and problem-solving workshops, mediation, peacekeeping and peace agreements as tools in resolving international conflicts.

The Theory of Conflict contributes to the understanding of the second causes of conflict in Liberia and DRC. The theory explains the reason the international community intervened in the conflicts in Liberia and the DRC to find lasting peace. The international community intervenes in conflicts to bring sustainable peace to countries. Further, the theory sheds light on the reason the UN and regional bodies intervened in the Liberia and the DRC conflicts through various initiatives. The Theory of Conflict helped the study to explain the cause of conflicts in the two countries. The overall relevance of the Theory of Conflict to the study is that the theory provided an explanation for the reason the UN and other regional bodies reacted differently to similar situations in ending the conflicts.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE LIBERIA SECOND CONFLICT

Liberia was a West African colony established by the American Colonial Society to resettle freed US slaves. The first shipload of freed slaves arrived in Liberia in January 1822, after Elis Ayres and Robert Stockton supposedly negotiated the purchase of the Cape Mesurado area of present-day Monrovia from King Peter and five others (Kotia, 2015). Between 1821 and 1867, approximately 10,000 freed slaves founded a resettlement and called it 'Liberia', which means the 'land of the free'. The capital Monrovia was named after President Monroe of the US. In 1847 the resettlement colony declared independence thereby creating the first black republic in the world run as a one-party state for 133 years by Americo-Liberians or 'Congo's' with a segregationist policy. Membership of the only recognized True Whig Party was limited to Americo-Liberians and 95% of the Liberian population were excluded from serving in the government and the military until the 1970s because such people were without provable Congo heritage. Citizenship of Liberia was not granted to the excluded indigenous people from sixteen ethnic groups until 1951 (Nerville, 2014). Americo-Liberians assumed a special relationship with America because of Liberian history and other connections such as family, educational and emotional connections to the US. However, the assumption turned out to be a fantasy during the conflict when President Bush refused to intervene and sent military contingent to protect American property and citizens (Nerville, 2014).

The segregation continued when Americo-Liberian President Tolbert was overthrown, publicly tortured and killed with thirteen cabinet members in a military coup led by General Samuel Doe in 1980 (Gounden, 2011). Doe's oppressive military regime destroyed the fragile economy resulting in debilitating standards of living. The Doe government favoured Doe's Krahn tribe and created ethnic divisions which sowed the seeds for the later conflicts and the numerous ethnic-based militias for the first war (Aboagye, 1999). The first Liberia civil war started in 1989 when Charles Taylor's rebel group invaded Liberia from Cote d'Ivoire to seek revenge on ethnic groups the Doe regime favoured. The invasion quickly gained the support of Liberians and developed into an attack on Doe's regime which collapsed in 1990 (Kotia, 2015). Vicious ethnic faction fighting continued until 1997 when elections were held, and Charles Taylor became President of Liberia with the hope of ending the first conflict. The conflict was one of Africa's bloodiest civil conflicts, resulting in the deaths of about 270,000 people. Under Taylor's rule, unemployment and illiteracy stood above 75% and little investment was made in the country's infrastructure to remedy the ravages of the war. Pipe borne water and electricity were generally unavailable to most of the population, especially the population outside of Monrovia. Moreover, schools, hospitals, roads and infrastructure remained neglected. Charles Taylor's tyranny led to the re-eruption of the second conflict two years after elections (Abdallah, 2005).

The second Liberia conflict started from 1999 to 2003 because of the failure of the post-first conflict transitional processes such as disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration and security sector reform (Aboagye, 2001). The post-first conflict peace building project failed owing to the use of ethnic incrimination by the Taylor government, the regime's abuses of human rights, bad governance, struggle for natural resources, poverty and failure to tackle the chronic social and economic problems. As a result, LURD launched armed attacks against the north-western regions on April 21, 1999. However, the Taylor regime was unable to counterattack the insurgents, thereby setting into motion the second Liberia conflict. The mass atrocities compelled ECOWAS, AU, UN, America and the international community to intervene in the conflict with various conflict resolution initiatives (Kieh, 2009).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO SECOND CONFLICT

The conflicts in the DRC have origins that date back to King Leopold II and through the colonial rules of the Kingdom of Kongo (United Nation, 2015). The Kingdom of Kongo controlled much of western and central Africa including the present-day western portion of the DRC between the 14th and the early 19th centuries (Rufanges & Aspa, 2016). The Kingdom was founded on Portuguese trade and raids on neighbouring districts in response to Portuguese' requests for slaves (Redick, 2009). Four million people were enslaved and sent across the Atlantic to sugar plantations in Brazil, the US and the Caribbean (Karbo & Mutisi, 2012). Belgian colonization of the DRC began in 1885 when King Leopold II founded and ruled the Congo Free State (Venugopalan, 2016). After an uprising by the Congolese people, Belgium surrendered and made the Congo independent in 1960. However, the Congo remained unstable because regional leaders had more power than the central government. Joseph Mobutu seized complete power of the Congo and renamed the country Zaire (Ogechi, 2008). However, with a regime weakened in the 1990s, Mobutu was forced to agree to a power-sharing government with the opposition party, remained head of state and promised elections within two years which never took place, hence, the first conflict.

The First Congo conflict began in 1996 as Rwanda grew concerned about members of militias involved in cross-border raids and the planning of an invasion (Carayannis, 2009). The new Tutsi-dominated government of Rwanda protested the violation of the territorial integrity and began supplying arms to the ethnically Tutsi of eastern Zaire. The intervention was denounced by the government of Zaire under dictator Mobutu Sese Seko who had no military capability to oppose (United Nations, 2015). In October 1996, Rwandan forces attacked refugee camps in the Rusizi River plain near the intersection of the Congolese, Rwandan and Burundi borders, scattering refugees (Mlambo & Dliamnin, 2019). Hutu militia forces formed alliances with the Zairian armed forces to launch a campaign against Congolese ethnic Tutsis in eastern Zaire (Stearns, 2019). Tutsi militias erupted in rebellion against Mobutu and formed the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre (Rogier, 2004). The coalition made significant military gains in early 1997. Laurent-Désiré Kabila marched into Kinshasa on 20 May and consolidated power around himself and the AFDL which led to the second conflict (Karbo & Mutisi, 2012).

The DRC second conflict started in 1998, a year after the first conflict ended. After Laurent-Désiré Kabila became president, Kabila demonstrated little ability to manage the problems of the country and lost allies. To counterbalance the power and influence of Rwanda in the DRC, Ugandan troops created the rebel Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), led by the Congolese warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba (United Nation, 2015). The MLC attacked in August 1998, backed by Rwandan and Ugandan troops and shortly afterwards, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe became involved militarily in the DRC second conflict, with Angola and Zimbabwe supporting the government to cause atrocities to life and property. The AU, UN, EU and the international community intervened in the conflict by making the six African governments sign a ceasefire accord in Lusaka in July 1999, but the Congolese rebels did not agree to the accord and the ceasefire broke shortly (United Nations, 2015). Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated on January 2001. He was succeeded eight days later by son Joseph Kabila amidst challenges. By April 2002, the Sun City Agreement, the ensuing July 2002 Pretoria Accord between Rwanda and Congo and the Luanda Agreement between Uganda and Congo put an official end to the war as Transitional Government of the Democratic Republic the Congo took over power in July 2003 (Sif Bjarnadóttir, 2017). In 2006, Joseph Kabila won the presidency in the DRC, was re-elected in 2011 and ruled until

2019 when Joseph Kabila handed power over to President Felix Tsisekedi.

CAUSES OF THE SECOND CONFLICTS IN LIBERIA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Invariably, a conflict resolution initiative which ignores the root causes of a conflict leads to further confrontations. Therefore, parties need to identify the sources of conflicts to understand the reason a conflict is or is not amenable to resolution to map up appropriate strategies to address the conflict. The conflict theory underpinning the study suggests conflicts are caused by poverty, human rights violations, corruption, bad governance, ethnic factor and natural resource factor. Hence, the section discussed such variables as the causes of the second conflicts in Liberia and the DRC.

According to the conflict theory of Schellenberg(1996), ethnic factor is a cause of conflicts in many countries. Schellenberg (1996) observes that to resolve any ethnically motivated conflict, the need arises to address all existing root causes of the conflict including ethnic differences. In the Liberian case, literature suggests ethnicity was one of the main causes of the second conflict. In the 10-year rule of Samuel Doe, pro-indigenous Liberian ethnic groups, such as the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups were more favoured than the other tribes. The disparity resulted in various ethnic tensions leading to the rebellious invasion of Americo-Liberian Charles Taylor, and the violent civil war that overthrew Doe's government in 1996. The aftermath of the civil unrest is the proliferation of ethnic factions, ethnic cleansing and mass brutal murders warring ethnic factions committed against harmless and innocent ethnic groups. The ethnic tensions did not cease after Taylor captured power but the other tribes felt marginalized resulting in the second civil conflict in 1998 under Prince Johnson's influence (Patrick et al., 2011).

Similarly, ethnicity played a significant role in the second conflict in the DRC. The DRC remains the second most ethnically diverse nation in the world with nine international borders, 215 languages, 450 tribes, several communities and cultures (Kabangula Ngoy-Kangoy, 2007). In the DRC, the mythology of ethnic differences was created and perpetuated by colonizers, political powers, foreign interests, rebel groups and the media (Karbo & Mutisi, 2012). The policy of divide-and-rule was reinforced by the Belgians refusing to let ethnic groups blend to form political parties (Redick, 2009). Whilst in power, Kabila launched a hate campaign of violence against Congolese Tutsis not supporting Kabila's political ambition. As a reward, many Rwandan Tutsis and Hutus were recruited into the Congolese army and others served the Kabila-led government. The mass recruitment into the army and government created and reactivated many local ethnic-based militias including the Mai-Mai and the Bembe threatened by Kabila's action and decided to align with rebel groups in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi for protection. However, fresh and more tensions between the opposing groups surmounted when Kabila began replacing Hutus and Rwandan Tutsis officials in government. Kabila's decision to expel all Rwandans from the military convinced Rwanda that Rwandan interests in the DRC were in serious trouble (Redick, 2009; Venugopalan, 2016). The factors greatly influenced Rwanda's decision to invade the DRC and to support the rebellion against Kabila leading to the second war in the DRC (Koning, 2009).

The foregoing discourse on the comparative analysis of the causes of conflicts in Liberia and the DRC indicates ethnic factor fuelled the second conflicts in both countries. The finding consistent with other findings made in Africa where ethnic factor was found to have influenced conflicts in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, Congo, Central African Republic and Ghana (Evaristus, 2019; Lema, 2000; Paglia, 2007; Sherman, 2006). Whilst the tribal politics in Liberia was between two major tribes affiliated to the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians, in the DRC, ethnic politics was

among many ethnic groups from the DRC and neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Rwanda. The tribal multi-nationality background of the belligerent factions in the conflicts made the DRC conflict complex, hence, difficult to resolve. Therefore, for a successful conflict resolution in the DRC, all state and non-state tribal warlords need to be identified and brought to the negotiation table. In Liberia, all ethnic differences were addressed when all factions belonging to the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians were involved in the peace process.

The conflict theory identifies the natural resource factor as a cause of conflicts globally (Schellenberg, 1996). Multiple studies have identified natural resources to have played a significant role in triggering and sustaining conflicts in most African countries. The studies suggest oil and gas, diamonds, gold, platinum, tin, uranium, timber and rubber generate conflicts (Demirag, 2014; Michael, 2004). In the case of Liberia, although the evidence is unclear, literature suggests the natural resource factor partly played an indirect role in the second conflict. The Liberian civil war began on 25th December, 1989, when Taylor led one hundred troops from the NPFL into Liberia from neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire to meet with businesspeople interested in gaining access to Liberia's iron ore and timber. Similarly, Charles Taylor financially supported RUF's invasion of Sierra Leone to take control over the diamond fields. The RUF leadership in turn traded Taylor's financial support for future diamond rights in Sierra Leone which had a market in Liberia to benefit Taylor's government (Michael, 2004).

On the other hand, in the DRC conflicts, the natural resource factor played a substantial role. The government lack of capacity established the ground for rebel armed groups to have control over the natural resources in the DRC. Unlike in Liberia where only the Sierra Leonean diamonds and iron ore played a role, multi and expensive resources such as tin, titanium, diamonds and coltan fuelled the DRC conflict. Such resources are highly attractive to international companies and regional actors. A case to support the point above is the Ugandan and Rwandan governments aligning to fight alongside rebels in the DRC partly because of the resource wealth (Michael, 2004). Additionally, unlike diamond mining process which was regulated, for most of the resources, a certification process was not required to trade. The advantage allowed international companies to easily trade with regional actors for the DRC's natural resources (Demirag, 2014). Though Rwanda and Uganda had no diamond resources, both countries exported diamonds more than the DRC from 1997 to 1998 and the DRC's exports decreased by more than 50% throughout the second conflict. To sustain the continuous access and exploitation of the natural resources in the DRC, countries such as Zimbabwe, Uganda and Rwanda had existing rebel networks to continue destabilizing the DRC (Venugopalan, 2016).

The discourse on the comparative analysis of the causes of conflicts in Liberia and DRC based on natural resources suggests in the Liberian case, only Taylor and allies were involved in the exploitation of the iron ore. Additionally, majority of the diamonds fuelling the conflict was mined in Sierra Leone but sold on the mineral market in Liberia (Michael, 2004). However, in the case of DRC, the natural resource business fuelling the conflict involved complex individuals made up of Congolese nationals and governments of other countries such as Uganda and Rwanda. Moreover, unlike the situation in Liberia where only Sierra Leonean diamonds and iron ore were involved, the conflict in the DRC was fuelled by many expensive local minerals (Venugopalan, 2016).

Literature suggests natural resources have ignited and sustained many conflicts in Africa such as the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Angola where diamond and oil respectively fuelled conflicts (Harsch, 2007; Voors et al., 2017). What makes the DRC's case different is the multifaceted nature of the people involved in the multiple minerals found in the country. Natural resources trigger conflicts because the livelihoods of most of the citizenry depend on the wealth from the

resources. The situation has resulted in the difficulty in resolving the conflict in the DRC. Therefore, for a successful conflict resolution in the DRC, all parties involved in the exploitation of the natural resource need to engage in negotiations. Further, the mining process of all minerals in the DRC requires regulation such that certification is issued before miners and traders are involved in any resource-related activities.

Proponents of the conflict theory argue conflict is built into the ways societies are structured and organized. The theory looks at social problems such as corruption and bad governance as sources of conflicts (Schellenberg, 1996; Tersoo & Ikem, 2014). Literature suggests Africa is among the poorest continents of the world largely due to harsh environmental conditions, corruption and bad governance. Corruption perpetuated by bad governance is a multidimensional problem that goes beyond economics to include social, political and cultural issues. Scholars including John Burton (1997), Laune Nathan (2003), Richard Sandbrook (1982) and Ted Gurr (1970) agree poverty results from a lack of human needs leading to reactions that trigger conflicts (Ikejiaku, 2009). Schellenberg's (1996) conflict theory argues conflicts and instability exist in developing countries because people are denied basic needs.

Corruption in the Liberian government is common knowledge to the international community, academic institutions and watchdog groups. The behaviour is deeply rooted in the Liberian social culture and is destructive to governmental functions, with the perpetrators holding high public offices. As a result, successive governments were unable to provide the basic needs of the average Liberian (Patrick et al., 2011). Corruption among Liberian officials in the area of resource mismanagement, embezzlement of funds, application of tyranny, abuse of power and institution of wars, placed the country in a deplorable condition. High levels of corruption and illegal activities among officials in the Taylor administration plagued all the sectors of the economy (Gobewole, 2015), which in turn, ignited the second conflict. Taylor, the then Director of the General Services Agency under President Doe's regime had the sole right to procure goods and services for all government agencies. Taylor and Taylor's kinsmen used the opportunity to amass great wealth within a short time to the advantage of the ordinary Liberian (Kotia, 2015). Taylor's corruption practices exasperated the vast majority of Liberians feeling marginalized and resorted to the second civil unrest.

In the case of the DRC, widespread corrupt practices were indirectly connected to the multiple natural resources found in the country. The second conflict in the DRC erupted when the alliance between Kabila and Ugandan and Rwandan mentors broke up and the country was divided. The western half of the country remained under the control of Kabila's central government and allies (Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad) whilst the northern and eastern fringes of the country were divided up among the proxy warlords supported by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi under the pretext of providing security along the common borders threatened by rebels (Bekoe et al., 2017). However, both halves exploited the natural resources. The DRC government granted mining concessions without due process and granted tax holidays to all government officials' business activities and signed joint venture contracts. The activities of the government, allies and rebels from neighbouring countries plundered the country into a hub of corruption. The businesses and the incentives accumulated wealth for the warlords and foreign allies to raise substantial revenues to fund the conflict. As a result, comprehensive commercial networks were set up that relied on violent predatory strategies to exploit the natural resources, fix prices and prey on the people. Government officials, international criminal networks and the rebels engaged in corrupt practices that plunged the country into hardship which fuelled the second conflict (Kodi, 2008).

The preceding discussions support the view of many scholarly works on the causes of conflicts where political corruption is argued to stand out as the most persuasive, compelling and primary cause of conflicts in Africa (Ikejiaku,

2009). The situations in Liberia and the DRC are similar to the situations in countries including Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Burundi where bad governance and corruption fuelled conflicts (Chêne & Rheinbay, 2015; Gobewole, 2015; Molemele, 2015).

The reason the DRC is not peaceful as compared to Liberia and other countries is the complex network of local and international government officials, international criminals and local and international rebels involved in corrupt practices in the DRC. Furthermore, the corrupt practices in the DRC are linked to the multiple mineral resources, playing a key role in the non-amenability of the conflict to resolution. Hence, for a successful conflict resolution in the DRC, the need arises to fight corruption within and outside the DRC.

The conflict theory propounded by Schellenberg (1996) argues human rights violation has triggered many conflicts globally. Incidences of human rights abuses and violations are numerous in West Africa and as such form the basis for the eruption and renewal of violent conflicts and civil strife in the sub-region (Annan, 2014). In the case of Liberia, serious and systematic abuses were committed against civilians, including looting, assault, rape, sexual violence and forced labour. The vast majority of the abuses was motivated by undisciplined and unpaid fighters seeking to obtain as much booty as possible. The abuses were pervasive during the first conflict, spilling off into the resurgence of the conflict in the second war. Such abuses included "Operation Pay Yourself" that encouraged troops to loot goods and products available. Furthermore, civilians were routinely forced to porter goods looted from villages and towns, including zinc roofing, domestic items, generators and other equipment and food from public and private buildings. Civilians were forced to work in the fields, harvest crops, pound harvested rice and cook the food for the fighting forces. Abductions of women and girls for sexual and domestic services were a regular feature of both conflicts (Kieh, 2009). Such actions ignited lawlessness and serious continuous widespread human rights violations leading to the second conflict.

In the case of the DRC, pervasive violation of civil and political rights during the first conflict prevailed. Human rights defenders, civilians and journalists were subjected to threats, arbitrary detentions, ethnic massacres, rape and harassment (Schlein, 2020). During the first conflict, numerous armed groups and government security forces attacked civilians, killing and injuring many. Additionally, non-state armed groups and government forces killed many civilians in separate conflicts and in many instances, armed assailants committed sexual violence against women and girls. Many armed commanders were implicated in such war crimes as ethnic massacres, rape, forced recruitment of children, pillage and kidnapping for ransom. The humanitarian situation before, during and after the second conflict in the country remained alarming, with millions of people internally displaced and registered as refugees and asylum seekers in other countries (Schlein, 2020; United Nation, 2015).

The discussion on the comparative analysis of causes of conflicts in Liberia and DRC with regard to human rights violations suggest no difference between human rights violation crimes committed in Liberia and in the DRC. The situations as recorded in Liberia and the DRC are similar to the causes of conflicts in many African countries including Sudan, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone where human rights violations have been cited as a cause of conflicts (Annan, 2014; Carrasco, 2014; Potts et al., 2011; Voors et al., 2017).

The explanation to the reason the DRC conflict, motivated by human rights violations, is not amenable to resolution is that majority of the perpetrators of the crime against innocent citizens were non-state actors interested in the mineral wealth. The involvement of non-state actors in the atrocities committed against civilians and the non-state actors' interest to create an atmosphere of insecurity to take advantage of the mineral wealth made the resolution of the second

DRC conflict complicated. However, in Liberia, undisciplined and unpaid state fighters violated human rights to “take their pound of flesh” but the situation improved when proper regulations were put in place to better the lot of government forces. Therefore, a successful resolution of the DRC conflict requires the setup of international bodies to handle human rights crimes and to punish the perpetrators.

Schellenberg (1996) states a successful conflict intervention needs to ascertain how and why a conflict started. Schellenberg (1996) indicates denying people of basic needs is a source of many conflicts in Africa. The number of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa grew from 217 million in 1987 to more than 300 million in 1998 (Corbett, 2005). In all, persistent low growth rates across Africa means most countries are unable to make significant reductions in poverty for the 50% of populations falling below the poverty line. Addressing the poverty factor forms the basis of the resolution initiative.

In Liberia, institutions created a political and economic divide between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous people (Boas, 2009). In other words, the former monopolized national leadership, enhanced leaders' wealth and resided in modern facilities whilst the latter had minimal political participation and lived in abject poverty (Harris, 2012). The disparity between the two factions undermined governance and led to the collapse of the Liberian state where poverty among ordinary Liberians was evident (Patrick, 2006; Pham, 2004).

The DRC is rich in natural resources, yet 64% of citizens are among the poorest in the world, living on less than \$1.90 a day (Reid, 2017). In general, the management of basic public services such as education, health, water and sanitation is extraordinarily limited in the DRC, with substantial regional variation. The lack of and the inability to build infrastructure limits the Congolese peoples' quality of life, proliferating poverty in the DRC. Access to nutritious food is a daily struggle for the Congolese people and the World Food Programme indicates millions of Congolese people are severely food insecure. Similar situations have been evident in poverty-driven conflicts recorded in Nigeria, South Sudan, Rwanda, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Kenya (Annan, 2014; Molemele, 2015; Momodu, 2018).

The preceding discussion suggests poverty was among the causes of the Liberia and the DRC second conflicts. However, several of the world's most expensive minerals are found in the DRC yet most citizens are poor compared to Liberia. The situation predisposes the DRC to continuous violence perpetrated by the people left out on the booty from the mineral revenue, hence, the non-amenability of the second conflict to resolution. For conflict resolution to succeed in the DRC, the government needs to provide livelihoods and developments to alleviate the suffering of the poor masses. The suggestion supports McHenry's (2010) argument that poverty-driven conflicts are resolved by providing food and development for the poor and not by military intervention.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM LIBERIA AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO SECOND CONFLICTS

The events during and after the second conflicts of Liberia and the DRC provided valuable lessons for similar future understanding of conflicts in Africa and how to resolve it. The first lesson are the causes of conflicts are multifaceted as such resolution must be multidimensional inclined. All the root causes of the conflict need to be identified before the conflict can be resolved. In the study, poverty, human rights violations, corruption and bad governance, ethnic and natural resource were identified. However, the situation surrounding the second DRC conflict were more complex as compared to causes of Liberia conflict (Atuobi, 2011). The DRC conflict was fuelled by multiple mineral resources involving many

ethnic groups from different countries committing serious human rights violations under corrupt leadership. The lack of institutions to deal with corruption, bad governance, human rights violations and mismanagement of mineral resources in the DRC has led to conflict. The lack of such institutions explains the reasons why the conflict has protracted in the DRC (Anderlini, 2004; Atuobi, 2011). The causes of conflict in Liberia and the DRC have created the environment for great lessons to improve understating of causes of conflict in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The Liberia and the DRC conflicts have created an environment for great lessons to understand conflict in Africa in the future. Conflict resolution is usually implemented based on wrong information of the causes of conflict and the conflict resolution initiatives adopted by some actors in conflict resolution. The lesson implies that any conflict resolution initiative should not ignore the root causes of the conflict. There is therefore the need for strong institutions to strengthened how to address the causes of conflicts to lay the foundation for a successful conflict resolution. Secondly, understanding the root causes of the conflict is imperative to the choice of the right conflict resolution initiatives for the prevention of humanitarian suffering and the protraction of the conflict.

The study suggested the root causes of the second conflicts in both countries were ethnic marginalization, natural resources, bad governance and corruption, human rights violations and poverty. In Liberia, bad governance, corruption, human rights violations, exploitation of natural resources, amassing wealth and tribal marginalization perpetuated by Charles Taylor and allies led to the second conflict whilst in the DRC, the root causes of the second conflict were perpetuated by networks of powerful individuals of Congolese descent and other nationals.

Liberia stands as a successful example of regional-body intervention in humanitarian crisis to avert atrocities with the support of the international community and the model needs to be replicated in futures crises. Furthermore, Liberia and the DRC conflict resolution suggests future initiatives in Africa requires the involvement of both state and non-state actors. When wrong causes of conflict are identified, wrong resolution initiatives are applied, humanitarian suffering worsens, the conflict escalates and defeats the conflict resolution initiatives and waste of human and capital resources. The overall contribution of the theme to the work is to help make recommendations for implementation of future conflict resolution initiatives in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to guide future conflicts and conflict resolution:

- For successful conflict resolution, both national and international institutions in war-torn countries need to identify all causes of conflict before any conflict resolution initiatives are employed.
- Africa Union and other regional bodies such as ECOWAS and SADC need to find resources to prevent, manage and sustain conflict intervention initiatives in Africa and not to depend too much on the international community for aid during conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made for future research:

- Future research needs to focus on the role of AU in researching in the causes of conflict in Africa for lasting

resolution of conflict in Africa. The Liberia and the DRC second conflicts did not see any active involvement of the AU in resolving the conflicts as compared to ECOWAS and SADC.

- Further research needs to conduct systematic review of all conflict resolution attempts in Africa to aid future conflict resolution initiative.

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